

Tape #448

## Tabby Weep White

*Topic: Ute Indian gunfighter Tabby Weep White and other outlaws, as well as life in general on the Duchesne Strip.*

*Interviewed by Robert "Bob" Foster, 9 February 2000*

*(With Mable Nebeker and Elizabeth Weist)*

Mable Nebeker (MN): We did have store in Fort Duchesne. For only three years. It seems... We had to have an Indian trader's license, as well as a county license. And then the Indians decided not to give us a license, they expected to do it themselves. And before they did that, they wanted to buy us out and combine our store with the one at Whiterocks that Bob Marimon had. And then they would move that inventory from Ft. Duchesne to Whiterocks. That was 1952. We bought the store in '49.

I've heard this story about Tabby. He has several names. Go ahead and hand me that book. It's under the newspaper. I have a picture. That was after he had been paroled from prison, and he was dressed up for a parade. He didn't look like that all the time, I'm sure.

Bob Foster (BF): Interesting. You know, from the events that transpired, I guessed he was born in 1875. Here it says he was born in 1875, so I was close. Would it possible to get a copy of that?

Mable: Well, I'm pretty possessive and I don't know whether....

BF: Oh, I wouldn't take the book, I'd just take a Xerox copy.

Mable: That's okay if you want to. That's the only picture I have of him. I've done a lot about the Indians. I was trying to think. Just about when do you think he committed this murder?

BF: It was July 23, 1910.

Mable: 1910?

BF: Uh huh. Yeah, it said that the person he shot was a person named Beldon Reynolds, and he went by the name Bob, or Uncle Bob. It said he was a good fellow, he was married and had a family. The information I have came out of the transcript of the trial, said that he and Bob Reynolds were good friends and he, in fact, had been living with Bob Reynolds at his place.

The way I read it, it said they came into town to the Strip. They came in together and Bob Reynolds came in to help put up decorations for the 24<sup>th</sup> of July parade. This was the day before, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, so he came in to help put up decorations for the celebration. Tabby Weep went over to the saloon. From that point on it gets really confusing, because Tabby Weep said, this was in a book, he told afterwards, his view. He said he was in a gunfight with three people, one was an attorney, one was a store owner, Mr. Nichols, and the other one was Bob Reynolds. As I read the transcript, I kind of got the feeling that Tabby Weep got the short end of the deal.

MN: We heard this story all our lives, that the fight was over money and liquor and Tabby was either drunk or he was trying to get a drink. At that time the Strip was lawless. The county didn't

have any jurisdiction over it and the Indian Department didn't. So there was no lawman. But it was still against the law to sell liquor to the Indians in any form. But the guys on the Strip, they had a method of hiding their liquor and the Indians would come and give them money and he'd tell them where they could find the bottle under a rock or a bush or somewhere. But nobody saw the exchange of money for liquor.

Have you ever heard of a writer by the name of George Stewart?

BF: Yes, yes. He's a noted historian in this area.

MN: Yes. Well, I have a book right there. That is a book that his daughters put together of the articles that George had written for different magazines and newspapers. He wrote for a lot of different things. And he has a story in there about Tabby Weep and he definitely sounds like Tabby went to get a bottle.

BF: I think in this book is where he got Tabby to tell about, in his words, tell about the gunfight, his perspective and his family's.

MN: Yes.

BF: And the way Tabby explained it, it sounded like Bob Reynolds came around a corner of a building. Tabby said he had a gun in his hand, he was going to shoot. Tabby was talking to this guy about the money, this attorney. Tabby said this attorney owed him some money and he was coming to take the money out and put it on a rock. And Bob Reynolds came out just then and told Tabby, he says, 'Tabby, don't shoot that man.' And Tabby said, 'Okay, I think I'll shoot you.' And he said they were standing about eight feet apart, both of them had a gun, and Tabby Weep shot Bob Reynolds. And he said he kind of walked around a little, then he fell down, but Bob Reynolds got a couple shots off and hit Tabby Weep, one grazed his ankle, one grazed his ribs. And that was Tabby's version.

MN: Well, that's what I read. I think I'll give it to you.

BF: But in the trial, when they had the trial, the trial was held right shortly after that. It was held in August of 1910. And the eyewitnesses of the gunplay, the actual gunfight, were Mrs. Bob Reynolds, Nora Caldwell, which was Bob Reynolds' sister-in-law, and then another lady that was friends with these two ladies. So, all the eyewitness testimony was from Bob Reynolds' relatives, or friends thereof. Nobody appeared for Tabby Weep. So, basically everybody said that the one that did the shooting, he was drunk. Well, I guess he was drunk a lot of the time.

MN: All of the time.

BF: Well, all of the time, yeah. Sounds like he was quite a.... The newspaper here said he was a good Indian when he was sober, but when he was drinking, he was mean, hard to get along, liked to shoot things up. But anyway, Tabby Weep, when he was on trial, he just lasted for just a short time and the eyewitnesses were all over here and he didn't have anyone to appear for his side, so he was found guilty of murder and was sentenced to life in the Utah State Penitentiary. And he

appealed that conviction twice and on his second appeal, he was paroled after eight years. He served eight years, got out in 1918. From that point, I don't know what happened to him, or anything at all.

MN: Well, he was around the reservation.

BF: Oh, was he?

MN: And he was, I don't know how much he drank, but the story that we've always heard was that he was a troublemaker. He was, I suppose, always under the influence, and white people were afraid of him. I don't know whether the Indians were or not, but everybody thought that Tabby was a bad Indian. And I can't blame him for feeling like [that], the way he had been treated... and maybe he was down on the white people. You know, just from what we hear. I can't help you very much, that's all I know. I don't know when he died, but surely you can find out at the tribal offices.

BF: Well, according to the woman over here, I asked her if she would be able to give me any information and she said that the Ute Tribe was very, very hesitant to give out any information about any of their people.

MN: Well, my word.

BF: I said if I went over to the cemetery and walked around and looked and saw a bunch of different names, so, like, I wouldn't know what name would be on a headstone, so would it be this name or Tabby Weep or Tabby White or one of those. And they said that if you go wandering around the cemetery somebody might shoot.

MN: Well, their cemeteries have been there a long time, and it was the Indians' custom to bury their jewelry and their valuables and things with them and then people would go loot them. I know of people who did that, a lot of times. But I know some boys who went up to the Whiterocks cemetery and they started digging and, boy, about the time they started digging, a bullet whizzed over their heads. They decided to leave right then because, they don't like you around their cemeteries.

BF: I didn't know that.

MN: Very few Indian graves, the older ones, very few of them are marked, or have markers.

[Conversation between Bob Foster and Liz Weist. It is mostly unintelligible, until Foster says]:  
He is buried then?

Liz Weist (LW): Yes. He was sixty-five years old.

BF: He was sixty-five when he died?

LW: Yes. In the cemetery east of the ?. Fort Duchesne.

BF: He was sixty-five years old when he died.

[Very difficult to hear. Bob Foster then summarized what Liz said:]

Tabby was buried in the Ft. Duchesne Indian cemetery. Liz mentioned an article written about him by Joy and Dick Horton. They researched him.

BF: Okay, let's see. He was born in 1875, lived until he was sixty-five. Tabby Weep would have died about 1940. That would have made him sixty-five years old in 1940. Did you ladies ever hear anything about whether he was married?

MN: Yes.

BF: He was married?

MN: Yes.

BF: Okay.

MN: To Adelchi. [She spells it.] That was her name.

BF: Did you ever hear if they had any children?

MN: No, I didn't.

LW: It's very likely that if they did, they grew up with their mother's name, because that was the tradition.

BF: Well, this is about one hundred percent more information than I had. Just from what you told me. Did either of your parents ever see Tabby Weep that you know of?

[The ladies didn't know.]

BF: I don't know if you ever knew what was there at the Duchesne Strip, when you were younger?

LW: Wong Sing's store.

BF: Wong Sing's store was there. The fort, Fort Duchesne, would that be across the river as you are coming east from Ft. Duchesne and go across the river? You come to a little town called Gusher. Is that Moffat?

Both women: Yes.

BF: It was the Duchesne Strip, then it became Moffat, then it became Gusher?

Both women: Yes.

BF's summary: White men wanted Gilsonite. Mable told him the land where Wong Sing's store once stood on the Strip now belongs to her son. It is of no value, but he wanted to keep it for its historical significance.

They discuss how the Strip was originally removed from Indian reservation land so white men could mine Gilsonite.

BF: I wrote a story about that. It was called the "Whiskey Camp Treaty." [The Indians] had to make a mark on a paper in order for these people to get a claim to mine Gilsonite .... because most of them didn't know how to read and write. So they had to come through and make their X [and a thumb print].

BF: Did you ever hear any stories about some of the goings-on out there on the Duchesne Strip? This Tabby Weep had a reputation, as a gunman, and according to statements that were made, and I don't know who made them, they were just in some of the different references, but they said that he was one of the fastest draws with a gun, if he shot, and they said that even Butch Cassidy and members of the Wild Bunch and some of the outlaws who went over to the Strip would greet him. Do you know if Tabby Weep went to the Strip often, or if he hung around the Strip?

MN: I've never heard that before. I imagine that he did, because that is where they could get liquor.

BF: He being an Indian, he would probably have a difficult time getting liquor unless he got it there at the Strip, wouldn't he?

MN: He couldn't buy it anywhere else. Someone would have to break the law to sell it to him.

BF: I understand there was quite a hefty fine, like if you had a store and you sold liquor to Indians, you could get arrested and put in jail.

MN: I do remember about the Strip. I remember the old buildings that used to sit there where they had a dance hall in some of the saloon buildings. They are gone now, but there might be evidence of their foundations. In fact, there was a lady here just a few minutes ago that owns a couple of lots where the Strip was and she said you could see the foundations where the buildings were. But I remember those old buildings there.

Lis Weist makes a comment, but it can't be understood.

BF: Just south down... There's a dirt road that goes down there and I went down there once and there was a cement foundation, kind of... That's all there was, just a cement foundation and I

assume that's where the Strip was located?

MN: That was. Those foundations there, that's where Sing's old store was.

BF: Okay.

MN: There was a scrap of land there, about 10 acres. My son owns it. It is completely valueless, but he bought it when he bought Wing's store.

BF: Is that land your son bought where the store was?

MN: The old store, yes.

BF: Okay.

LW asks question.

BF: Yeah, as you're coming from Ft. Duchesne toward Gusher, you'll be going up a little hill and just before you get to the top of the hill, you turn and go south. And then it's kind of on the east side of the road. Okay, I've got the right place then?

Some garbled talk.

MN: There used to be a bridge across the river, down at Ft. Duchesne, it came across there. It was only about three-quarters of a mile from Ft. Duchesne to Sing's old store. There's a bridge across the river right down in Ft. Duchesne.

Unintelligible comments, something about UBIC.

MN: And high water took that bridge out one year and they never did build it back because there was one up on the highway.

BF: Oh. Where that Chinaman's store was, was that in the same vicinity where Elza Lay's saloon was also?

MN: No. It was down the Strip, further east.

BF: Further east, huh?

MN: Somewhere near where ? is. In that vicinity. I don't know exactly where.

BF: Oh, okay. So the store was by itself and then the Strip was further east.

MN: Yes. It was on the Strip, just on the edge of it.

BF: Oh, and then the rest of the Strip was further east.

Unintelligible comments.

BF: They said that Duchesne Strip was really wild. Like you said, there was no law and order there because of the geography. They had the Gilsonite mining, set the 7000 acres aside, and the Indian police couldn't go there because the miners had it; and the county couldn't go there because it was on the reservation. They said that a federal marshal could go there if a federal law was broken, but they didn't break any federal laws on the Strip. They said if you murdered somebody, or you robbed or you beat somebody, or did any of those, they were not federal crimes, so the federal marshal couldn't go there either unless a federal law was broken. They said maybe the only federal law they were breaking is that all the Indians were drinking over there. I'm not sure if that was against a federal law, I think it was. But I kind of got the idea that even a federal marshal couldn't go in there.

Unintelligible comment.

BF: Yeah, they said the nearest federal marshal was in Salt Lake and that the commanding officer in Ft. Duchesne out here, a guy named Randlett, wrote to the attorney general and he said 'That Duchesne Strip is the worst place I have ever seen.' He said the worst form of life lives there, there's all kinds of saloons and things and he said can't you do something about it. And nobody from Salt Lake *could* do anything about it. He said there was nothing you could do. So he just kept going.

MN: I know there were a few people who thought they could go there and put up a saloon and make all kinds of money, sell liquor to the Indians.

BF: So there was more than one saloon?

MN: Quite a few. I don't know how many, but I know of a man that sold his cow herd and went down there and put in a saloon. He wasn't a businessman, and he went broke. I heard him tell stories about it. One, and he wouldn't say who, but some fellows buried a Negro boy in the ground, with just his head sticking out and shot at his head for target practice. There was a lot of people killed there.

LW says something about Buffalo Soldiers

BF: Yeah, I heard that. They really didn't like the black soldiers. But after the black soldiers got here, then they kind of got along. I didn't realize that we had black soldiers in Utah, and they said they were here for 16 years. Ft. Duchesne was built in 1886 and those Buffalo Soldiers were here until they went down to the Spanish/American War in Cuba in 1898 .

So, it was an interesting place over here, the black Buffalo Soldiers really didn't get into a lot of battles or anything, but they said that when they moved the Indians from Colorado over here to Utah, they moved the White River Utes, some of them, Uncompaghre Utes, they moved them over here, and they didn't like it here. They liked their beautiful country in Colorado. So,

sometimes they would sneak back into Colorado and people in Colorado didn't ? They would call out the sheriff, call out the militia. One time the militia came and they were going to annihilate these Utes. There were only, I think, ten Buffalo Soldiers and their officer went out there and met the Colorado militia and the Colorado militia wouldn't fire at the crack Buffalo Soldiers. They had several units there, but there were only ten Buffalo Soldiers and they escorted the Indians back to the reservation.

MN: Do you have this book?

BF: I have access to it.

MN: It's a book of the Ute people. It's supposed to be about the Southern Utes, but it does tell about the things that happened.

BF: That's my next story. I'm writing a story about the Southern Utes, the last battle down by Moab. After I get this Tabby Weep story done.

MN: Have you ever written anything on Chief Ouray?

BF: Yes. Very interesting man, too. I wanted to ask you, getting back to the Strip again. You know, everybody says they had a grandfather or somebody who knew Butch Cassidy, and some of those people like Elza Lay and Bub Meeks and Kid Curry that had the Hole-in-the-Rock Gang. They used to hang out around the Strip. Did your parents or that ever know Butch Cassidy or know anything about him?

LW: unintelligible

MN: My mother said she saw Butch Cassidy once. When she was a young girl, she was with her sister here in Vernal and she saw Butch Cassidy and another man ride down the street on their horses. That was the only time she saw Butch Cassidy.

BF: That was in Vernal?

MN: I couldn't tell you about where it was.

LW: unintelligible

BF: What was the poet's name?

LW: Dick Ufford. He lives just a block south of the temple. On Second South.

MN: They used to tell stories about the outlaws. In the early days the road came from Ft. Duchesne up through Lapoint and over the mountain and down the Dry Fork Canyon. The freighter teams couldn't make it up through the Twists with their loads because they were worn out and tired by the time they got back, and so they went up that way. The outlaws used to come



over that way occasionally, too. My grandfather that lived up on Deep Creek, he said that one time a man stopped at his corrals and roped his very best horse, put his saddle on him and he said he went out and asked him what he was doing and he said his horse was give out and he needed a fresh horse and it was Bub Meeks.

BF: Oh, really?

MN: And he told Grandpa, he said, “You feed that horse up and get him in shape and he’ll be as good a horse as the one I’m taking!”

Laughter

LW, not intelligible, except: ... the best of the bunch.

MN: You know, it was good and bad with all of the bunch of them.

LW: I mean the best horses.

BF: Now where was your grandfather’s farm, or ranch? Did you say Dry...

MN: No, it was up Deep Creek. Over the hill from Dry Fork. My brother still has it.

BF: Oh. Those outlaws sound like kind of interesting people.

MN: Yes, they were.

BF: And, uh, they... I guess there were some mean ones. I was reading somewhere that this one, called Kid Curry was the meanest one of the bunch. They said the Sundance Kid, you know, Harry Longabaugh, Butch Cassidy, and all those other guys were just ordinary kinds of people, you know. But some of them were just really vicious and mean, [like] this Kid Curry. I was reading that they decided that in, I think it was in 1896, they decided to have a meeting up here at Brown’s Hole, and they called it the Great Train Robbery Syndicate. And they were going to decide how was the best way to rob trains. And it says that 200 gunmen came to that meeting, and they couldn’t decide who was going to be the leader of the bunch, Butch Cassidy or this Kid Curry. And so Butch Cassidy, of course, he came up with an idea and he said, “Well, why don’t we leave here and in one year we’ll come back and the guy that has pulled off the most spectacular robberies will be the leader of the gang.

So, Butch Cassidy, he took, they called them the Wild Bunch, and Kid Curry took his bunch, the Hole-in-the-Rock Gang, or something like that, and they went their separate ways, and Butch Cassidy went out, did all kinds of spectacular robberies and Kid Curry went up to South Dakota and he robbed a bank, and the Sundance Kid was with him, and his whole gang got captured and put in jail. So, when they came back the following year to meet, Butch Cassidy became the big guy because he had made the most successful robberies. So it sounded like kind of an interesting group of men.

Didn’t most of the people, most of the farmers and ranchers like these fellows?

LW: Yes.

BF: And spoke highly of them? And would protect them from the law?

MN: Yes. It was to their advantage to be friends to these ranchers and farmers because they could come over and stop for a meal any time and be welcome. You know the story of Butch Cassidy going to that farmer's place for dinner and the people were really worried because a banker was coming out. They couldn't pay their loan off, and the banker was coming to take their ranch. Butch Cassidy asked how much they owed. He told him and he gave him the money, and the man came and they paid him off. Down the road, Butch Cassidy stepped out from behind a rock and held the fellow up and got his money. He did lots of things like that, and people liked him that lived in this country. He didn't really hurt anybody, only the people that owed money to him.

BF: Yeah, people said he never shot anybody. Butch Cassidy didn't ever shoot anybody. You know, there is a story about how he went down to South America, some people said he came back. The movie showed he got shot in Bolivia, but a lot of people say he came back. His own sister said... Let's see, what was her name?

LW: Lulu Betenson.

BF: Yeah, Lulu Betenson. I've been down to where Butch Cassidy was born, down in that Circleville country, and ....

LW: unintelligible.

BF: Yeah, so I don't know. I don't know about that.

MN: He's got us all in the dark.

BF: Yeah, several people said that they'd seen him after South America. That he came back and he was up in Washington, or something, for a while, then he came back this way.

LW: unintelligible.

BF: Oh, really? I don't know why people would have any reason to lie about something like that. They either saw the person or they didn't, you know, and ? said they saw him.

MN: His sister said he came to visit his father.

BF: Yeah.

MN: I read her book.

BF: Just the people you've mentioned around here; it would be a good place to move out here

and live. You could write books and publish stories to your heart's content.

MN: There's lots of history.

BF: I just want to ask you a couple other things. Oh, I guess you wouldn't know by any chance or have heard anything about whether... You know a lot of the Ute Indians converted over to the LDS faith. And did you ever hear maybe what religion Tabby Weep White was? Was he maybe LDS or....?

MN: No.

BF: If he was, he probably wasn't very good LDS all the time.

LW: unintelligible.

BF: After Tabby got released from prison, I think you mentioned that people were quite frightened when he came back, when he came back from prison, people, I guess, around Roosevelt and Ft. Duchesne and that area. Do you know if he ever did any bad things after he got out of prison? He said, he claimed, in that story there that Mr. Stewart wrote, that he had Tabby tell the story. Tabby said after he got released from prison, he never carried a gun again. So, I didn't know. That was Tabby speaking. I didn't know if that was true or not. Did you ever hear that he'd done anything bad?

MN: No, I get the feeling that people were afraid of him. I guess they thought if he could kill once, he could do it again. He was drunk all the time and I think they were afraid of him, but I never heard of anything.

BF: I guess if, on the reservation, if he got out of line or something, probably the Indian police would probably put him in jail or something.

MN: Oh, yes. I'm sure they would.

BF: I imagine the Indian police would probably be afraid of him, too.

MN: Yes, I'm sure. I know there was one Indian policeman, his picture is in the book, too, John Victor, he wasn't afraid of anything, or anybody. He was an Indian policeman for a long time.

BF: He'd probably come into contact with Tabby Weep on many occasions.

MN: Oh, I imagine he did. They were there at the same time.

BF: You know, there would be an interesting topic to write about, too: Indian police. I've never seen an article in a magazine about Indian police, what they do and some of their problems. That would be interesting. My editor told me, he said, "If you write a story, any story that you write, if it's about minority groups, like Indian people, black people or women," he said, "It is almost an

automatic sale.”

When I suggested this article about Tabby Weep, he said, “Oh, I’m interested in that.” I told him two or three other things and he said, “I want that story about that Indian gunfighter.” In fact, I’ve been kind of looking around, wondering if there might have been a woman law officer back then. I’ve never heard of one, but a woman sheriff or a woman marshal here in Utah territory. I don’t think there was such a thing, I’ve never heard of it. But something like that. The editor, if you’ve got something like that, his ears just perk up. Okay, well let’s see here if I wrote down some questions.

Oh, I had a list here. You’ve probably already answered this, but I was just going to ask how did the folks of your generation feel about Indians? I think you mentioned that your father wouldn’t let them starve to death, helped them. Did he ever learn to talk to them in their language?

MN: Yes. We always had Indians camped in our pastures.

BF: My father-in-law lived in the Beehive Home in South Jordan, Utah. He always told us that he and his people were from up in Honeyville, Utah, which is north of Brigham City. He said that as a little boy, he remembers the Indians from Fort Washakie, up in Idaho, they would come down to Utah, and they would order goods and things, and he said they would always stop at his dad’s place, and the Indians would camp there at his dad’s place. He had a fruit orchard there, and he would let the Indians pick some fruit. He always liked to tell the story. He said one time an Indian lady grabbed him when he was a little kid. This Indian squaw grabbed him and it just terrified him, it scared him to death. But she had made a pair of moccasins, beaver moccasins. She grabbed him and she was going to put the moccasins on him. He said he could still remember how scared he was when that Shoshone Indian woman grabbed him. But he always remembered the Indians camping out by their house there, by the ditch bank.

MN: I did that with such things as that Bear River Massacre.

BF: That was an awful thing.

MN: That was a terrible thing.

LW: They say it’s a massacre if we win, we’re the survivors when they win.

BF: It’s a massacre if the Indians do it, it is a battle if we do it. That was an out and out massacre, that Bear River thing. In fact, they just had a thing in the paper about that, not more than a month ago. Oh, it was in this latest issue, I just got it last week, it was in the Utah Historical Quarterly. And they had just found some new information that was in a person’s house in California. He was up here with the California Volunteers. He was a sergeant in the Army, and he had a letter, not a letter, but a diary, and he had mentioned the battle: where the soldiers were and what time it was and who did what, and it shed a whole bunch of new light on this battle.

Anyway, as far as you know, your people liked the Indians for the most part?

MN: Yes. We didn’t have a great deal to do with them.

BF: But you weren't bitter toward them or anything like that?

MN: No, we weren't bitter toward them.

BF: They were just people, just like you?

MN: Yes. We lived in Ouray. My husband and me went to Ouray when we got that mail contract in 1934 and we weren't afraid of them. It was only one other white family living there, and that was the end of the ? down there. Four hundred and fifty families or something, I don't know just how many. Very few of them could talk English. We didn't feel afraid of them, but the ? speak all the time. They never quit. We didn't know what they were and we didn't know what they meant. We didn't worry about them. Now I'd be scared to death in the same situation. I wasn't then. I didn't know that I should be.

BF: Would you have any idea what particular band the Indian Tabby Weep might have belonged to?

(Changed to reverse side of tape.)

BF: Maybe he came back. He would either be a White Ute or an Uncompahgre Ute.

MN: Well, there were several bands that were all Ute people. I don't know, he may have been Uncompahgre, maybe even a White River.

BF: I put down that he probably was, because I'm assuming that if he went to school in Colorado as a young man, he was probably born in Colorado, he wouldn't live here and go all the way to Grand Junction to go to school. Probably not.

MN: Oh, I don't know. They used to move those Indian kids around a lot.

BF: Yeah, well like up in Brigham City. They had the Intermountain Indian School and they used to ship a lot of Navajo kids up there.

MN: From all over.

BF: Yeah, I guess from all over.

MN: From the east and everywhere.

BF: Yeah. Well, I guess, yeah, we'll just have to take a guess that he was. There were three groups there. I think there were the Uintah band and the White Rivers and the Uncompahgres.

MN: The Uintah band was moved from down around Provo. From near Timpanogos? They were moved from that area on over to the reservation.

BF: Oh.

LW: That's where the Crazy Indian came from.

MN: What?

LW: Crazy Indian, I call him.

MN: Well yeah, he was one of those.

BF: Is that that one I was reading about at the library over here that was kind of a strange Indian that lived here in Vernal, that lived without any clothes on?

LW: He didn't live in Vernal. Whiterocks.

MN: He lived in Whiterocks.

BF: Oh, he lived over there. I think it said in the winter time, he was without clothes on or something.

MN: Well, it was a punishment. He was punishing himself. When they were bringing the Indians from the Provo area over to the Uinta Basin, I don't know why, but he threw a rock and killed his mother, and that was the punishment. These Indians say he wasn't crazy, but most everybody thought he was. But they used to take a little care of him and he had a tepee of his own. I heard them say in the winter time, sometimes his hair would freeze to the ground and they would have to chop it off with an ax to get him loose. But they fed him. He lived like a wild animal.

BF: That's interesting.

MN: Dad used to tell me that he'd seen him a time or two. He went to Whiterocks once in a while.

LW: unintelligible.

MN: Oh yeah, that was a punishment, too.

LW: unintelligible.

BF: What was that Indian policeman's name again, you said was a tough lawman? He was a Ute Indian.

MN: John Victor. [Apparently shows him a picture in a book] He was head policeman for a long time, John Victor was. And then when he resigned, I don't know what happened to him. Then Harris became the policeman for some time. Since then, I don't know.

BF: I wonder if they have a Xerox machine here in this place? Would you permit us to run over to the library and take a Xerox of that and bring it right back? Take a picture of this, Tabby on his horse?

LW: unintelligible.

MN: If you have time to look through here, you might want all these pictures.

BF: Okay. Well, we were just over to the library, just a bit ago, just before we came over here, and they have a Xerox in there.

LW: unintelligible

MN: You could... I don't know whether you could buy this book or not. It was bought here at Bitter Creek bookstore.

BF: Oh. Well, the only picture I could find of Tabby Weep there was a picture of him, *The Salt Lake Tribune* ran a story about him back in 1968 and there was a picture of him standing there in his garden, said he raised watermelons. It says, "Tabby Weep in his melon patch." And that was the only known picture that I could find. So this one would be a great picture to put in the article. I could make a Xerox, then I'll have it laser printed.

MN: unintelligible

BF: OK, no problem.

[Some sort of motion in the room. Lapse in conversation.]

BF: He was an Indian policeman, huh?

MN: Yes, he was.

BF: Oh, it's got a lot of Indian pictures!

LW: He used to be a photographer. [The rest is not understandable, except a brief mention of the Regional Room.]

BF: We were going to run back over. I wanted to say hi to Kathleen and the folks over there. She sent me some information. I could get a picture, then I could just run this back to you, because we have to go back that way to get home, so I could just drop this off on my way back.

MN: That would be fine.

BF: Well, I could leave him [his son Paul] as collateral.

MN: I've just lost so many good books by loaning them.

BF: Oh, I have, too. I don't loan books any more. People take them and never bring them back.

MN: That's what I'm thinking. I had such a good book about Preston Nutter and his ranching business down by Nine Mile. Oh, it was worth a fortune. My husband insisted on letting somebody read it, and then we asked about it and "Oh, I let somebody else take it." And we never did get it back.

BF: Yeah, I had a book called *Men to Match My Mountains*, and I loaned it to somebody, it was my favorite book, and it was about the west and fur trappers and everything, and I never did get it back, and now I can't remember who I loaned it to. But, yeah, I got to the point that every time I loaned a book, nobody would ever give them back to me. But I would like to get a copy of that and we'll just bring it right back to you.

What I'd like to do, too, is, if it's okay, is mail you a copy of my latest article. It's in *Wild West Magazine* and you can have it. I'll just mail it out to you and you can both read it. It's got some pictures of the Buffalo Soldiers and tells [about] the commanding officer, it's kind of interesting. I don't know if the folks out here know, but when Ft. Duchesne was built, it was built in 1886, the commanding officer, the first commanding officer, was Major Frederick Benteen, and Major Benteen didn't like the blacks and he didn't like the whites, and he didn't like the Mormons, and he didn't like anybody, you know? He was in battle with Custer at the Battle of Little Big Horn, ten years before, and there's a lot of controversy about that, too, but while he was the commanding officer over here at Ft. Duchesne, it said that he hated the black soldiers and then he said, quoted, he said, "A lot of people think I came to Utah to fight Indians." He said, "I didn't come to Utah to fight Indians, I came to fight Mormons."

He hated, just absolutely hated, Mormons, and there was a local sheriff here in Uintah County, I believe his name was Sheriff Colton, S.D.? I said Cotton, but that was a misquote. I think his name was Colton. Anyway, Benteen pulled a pistol on him and was going to kill him. They were in a store. I can't remember just where it was, but anyway, Benteen was drunk, they said he was always drunk, and he pulled his pistol and was going to shoot the sheriff and one of the soldiers, a captain, that was with him, the only friend he had, grabbed his arm and pulled it away.

As I was researching, I couldn't understand his bitter hatred toward Mormon people, and as I got looking, I found out he was born in Missouri. He was a Missourian, and it had probably been close to the time when Joseph Smith and the Mormon people came into Missouri and all of that. His people, when the Civil War started, all of his people went to the Confederacy and he was a Union Army officer and his family disowned him and they would never speak to him again. But I figured that maybe that bitter attitude he had about Mormon people was because he was from Missouri.

While he was over here at Ft. Duchesne, he really caused a lot of problems. They said that he didn't like any of the people, you know he hated Mormons, but he hated everybody else, too. He didn't just single them out. He hated Indians, he hated white people, he hated everybody. So they were kind of glad to get rid of him. He only lasted about four months, then they sent him off. But they said he was drunk all the time, he never drew a sober breath, and so they sent



another officer here to investigate, and he did find that that was the case, that he was always drunk, so they brought him up on court-martial charges, conduct unbecoming an officer. In the presence of ladies, officers wives and everything, he was drunk. They said he urinated on his tent right in front of all these women. Of course, it just shocked everybody, you know. So this officer found him, they brought him up on charges, conduct unbecoming an officer. He was found guilty and he was discharged. They gave him a discharge from the service, but he had a lot of friends, so he got reinstated. But he was only out here for about four months and then they transferred him somewhere else.

But anyway, I would like to get that photo of Tabby and when I get back, I've got some extra copies of that magazine, so I'll mail them out and you guys can keep it. Then when my Tabby Weep story comes out, I'll send you a copy of the magazine. They give me some extra copies, so I like to spread them around for people who are interested in it.

I appreciate all this information. That's a lot more than I had when I started.

MN: We don't know much really. It all happened a long time ago.

BF: This way, knowing that he was in fact born in 1875... See, it was twenty-five years to 1900, then to 1910, it was another ten years. So he would have been thirty-five years old when he was in the gunfight. So, knowing his birthday, I can tell exactly how old he was, so he would have been thirty-five when the gunfight happened, then he was sentenced. Right after the gunfight he was sentenced to eight years in prison, so we can add eight onto thirty-five and tell how old he was when he got out of prison. Then he was sixty-five when he died, so we've got kind of a time line.

MN: Tell me something. Was he sentenced to eight years, or was he sentenced to a longer time?

BF: Oh, he was sentenced to life at hard labor.

MN: That's what I thought.

BF: But he got paroled in 1918. See, that's why I kind of think he got the short end of the stick on that trial. He was sentenced to life in prison and he appealed it. He said he shot in self-defense. On his first appeal, he appealed in 1914 at the prison, they didn't grant him any parole or anything like that. So, four years later, in 1918, he appealed the second time and that time they paroled him. So, I figured that, for first degree murder, he was charged with murder in the first degree, sentenced to life and he got out in eight years, they paroled him. So I assume, I just have to assume, from that the parole people had some doubts in their minds about whether this guy was actually guilty of first degree murder.

MN: Well, maybe it was new people.

BF: Yeah, it could have been that, too.

MN: All right, tell me something. You haven't written anything or read anything about US Marshals?

BF: Not in my whole life.

MN: I know that my husband's uncle was a US Marshal. He was sent out here, but I don't know the date at the time. His name was Aquila Nebeker. He bought a ranch. While he was US Marshal, he bought a ranch down in the Independence country. He never lived there, but he hired the work done on the farm. I don't know much about that man, and I'd like to know more about him. I do know that in Edna Skirt's grocery store they used to have a picture of some of the Indians and a US Marshal, and Uncle Quill was a marshal. I don't know if they've still got that picture. I just don't know much about it. I'd like to.

BF: OK, if I happen to run across something like that... I'm always researching stuff over at the Utah Historical Society or in the library, so if I'm in there, I'll see if I can find anything.

MN: I'd like to know what their duties were, and how long there was US Marshals.

BF: About the only ones I know about are John Wayne, when he was playing in the movies, "True Grit." That's about the only US Marshal I know about.

[The rest of the tape is mostly chit chat about fishing, four-wheel drive, winter conditions, turkey tracks, weather. There is little historical content. Mable said she was almost 88 years old. Liz is 84. Liz spent her whole life in the Vernal area. Mable lived a few other places, but mostly here.

BF mentions a letter written to the editor of *Wild West Magazine* about his Buffalo Soldiers article: One guy wrote to the editor. I said when Major Benteen came with his troops, the Indians were kind of riled up over here. They didn't want the Buffalo Soldiers to come, and there were almost, well, 300 of them were on the warpath. They had the 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry. They all came from Wyoming, and the 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry got there first. The Indians were all around them. Then the Buffalo Soldiers were coming. They were coming about two or three days later. As the Buffalo Soldiers came, the tension increased and everything. I wrote in the article the 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry was happy to see the Buffalo Soldiers because they had a Hotchkiss Mountain Gun, which was a "gas-operated machine gun." The fellow wrote to the editor and said the Hotchkiss Mountain Gun was not a machine gun, it is a cannon, a small cannon. And it was. I copied that information from doctoral dissertation from Brigham Young University. I had the library borrow that. It was two great big, thick books and in there this guy who is a doctor, smarter than me, he said it was a machine gun. So I assumed he knew what he was talking about.]